# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
# LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:429
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2003
AGENDA FOR FORTHCOMING WTO MEET
V. SAROJA

**Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:**

(a) the agenda for the forthcoming Ministerial meet of WTO to be held at Cancun, Mexico in September, 2003;

(b) the issues which require detailed deliberations;

(c) India`s stand on these issues;

(d) The manner in which India has prepared itself to help in arriving at a consensus on these issues;

(e) The countries which have decided to support India`s views on the issues in the WTO meet to protect the interest of developing countries; and

(f) The details of meetings held by developing countries including India to arrive at a consensus on the issues?

## Answer

MINISTER FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY)

(a) to (f) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 429 ANSWER ON 22nd AUGUST, 2003, REGARDING AGENDA FOR FORTHCOMING WTO MEET

(a) & (b): The agenda for the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference of the WTO, scheduled to be held in Cancun (Mexico) from 10-14 September 2003, has not yet been circulated. However, in terms of the decision of the Ministers at Doha, as contained in the Doha Ministerial Declaration, the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference will take stock of progress in the negotiations under the work programme adopted at Doha; provide any necessary political guidance; and take decisions as necessary. Further, explicit consensus would be required on modalities at Cancun for launch of negotiations on the four so-called Singapore issues, namely, Trade and Investment; Trade and Competition Policy; Transparency in Government Procurement; and Trade Facilitation.

(c) & (d): India has been actively participating in the negotiations on various issues included in the Doha Work Programme. India has consistently taken the stand during these negotiations that the development dimension of the Work Programme should be maintained and not diluted at any cost.

In so far as negotiations under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture is concerned, India`s position has been that further commitments on market access by developing countries are contingent upon substantial reduction in all trade-distorting domestic support and elimination of all forms of export subsidies. Moreover, any market access commitments by developing countries should take fully into account their economic and social conditions, development needs, food and livelihood security and rural development requirements. India has pointed out that the mandate for negotiations provides that special and differential treatment for developing countries shall be an integral part of all elements of the negotiations in agriculture.

In respect of non-agricultural products, India has strongly advocated increased market access for products of export interest to India such as textiles, leather goods. India has also stressed the need for providing for `less than full reciprocity` in the matter of reduction commitments. Expressing strong interest in the services` negotiations, India has asked for greater liberalization in the movement of natural persons.

On the so-called Singapore issues, views of WTO Members are still divergent on many of the key aspects. Greater clarity would be required before any decision on modalities could be considered. The clarificatory process mandated at Doha should be continued so as to reach a broad understanding of all aspects of the issues involved.

India has been coordinating at bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral levels, both with developed and developing country partners aimed at resolution of all the development-related issues, such as TRIPS and Public Health; Special and Differential Treatment; and Implementation-related issues, on a priority basis so as to have a successful outcome at the Cancun Ministerial Conference.

(e) & (f): The Doha Ministerial Declaration provides a development focus for the negotiations launched at Doha. Hence, all WTO Members recognise the need for special attention to developing countries by providing special and differential treatment and technical

assistance/capacity building programmes in favour of developing countries. India would press for the retention of this focus throughout the negotiations and at the conclusions to be arrived at. Support for India`s views in WTO from developing countries vary from issue to issue.

A group of like-minded countries, where India is also a part, meets informally in Geneva regularly. Meetings held among groups of developing countries include a meeting of the Ministers of Trade from the Eastern and Southern Africa held in Nairobi on 28th May 2003; the Second LDC Trade Ministers` meeting in Dhaka held from 31 May-2 June 2003; the Trade Ministers` meeting of the African Union in Mauritius from 19-20 June 2003; and the sixth meeting of ACP Trade Ministers held in Brussels from 31 July - 1 August 2003. India will be hosting a meeting of Trade Ministers of the Like Minded Group of developing countries at Cancun prior to the Ministerial Conference. Other developing countries in general share the views of India on development-related issues such as TRIPS and Public Health; S&D treatment for developing countries; and resolution of implementation-related issues and concerns with existing WTO Agreements; and to a greater extent on the Singapore issues.